



Bernard T. Gillis

March 7, 1931 - July 11, 2022

Bernard Thomas Gillis, 91, of Estero, Florida, passed away on July 11, 2022.

“Bernie” was born in Pierre, South Dakota on March 7, 1931, a son of the late Rebecca Evelyn Lehrke and Edward John Gillis. He graduated from Saint Patrick’s High School in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and then received a Bachelor of Science degree in Chemistry from Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa in 1952. As a student he participated in intramural basketball throughout his four years, and was a member of the Delta Sigma fraternity.

Bernard was awarded a Ph.D. in Organic Chemistry from Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan, graduating in June 1956. He was also inducted into The Society of the Sigma Xi (promoting science research) in 1954 and in 1955 was recognized by Sigma Xi for research of fundamental significance. Bernard was active in Phi Lambda Upsilon, Phi Delta Kappa, and Phi Kappa Phi honor societies. While at Wayne State, Bernard married Arlene Faye Hamilton, of Reinbeck, Iowa in August 22, 1953. At that time she was in the Mercy Hospital School of Nursing at Loras College.

After receiving his doctorate, Bernard completed a post-doctoral fellowship in Organic Chemistry at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston, Massachusetts.

In 1957, Bernard became an associate professor of Chemistry at Duquesne University, and subsequently was promoted to Chairman of the Department of Chemistry. During his tenure he published over 30 papers and successfully filed for and received a number of patents. He was appointed Dean of the Graduate School in 1968.

Two years later, Bernard moved his family to Indiana, Pennsylvania, to become Dean of Academic Affairs at Indiana University of Pennsylvania and one year later, in 1971, was promoted to Academic Vice President at the university. During his time in Indiana he was an active supporter of the Army ROTC program at the university. He was elected President of the Serra Club (dedicated to promote and foster Catholic vocations) and in the same time period he was elected to serve on the Board of Regents for Loras College.

Less than ten years later Bernard accepted a position as the Provost of Youngstown State University in Youngstown, Ohio in 1980. In 1984, Bernard was selected to participate in the Charter Class of Leadership Youngstown. He was also named to the Board of Trustees for the Youngstown Hospital Association, the Youngstown Symphony Society, the Park Vista Council, and in 1985 he was named President of the Board of Trustees for McGuffey Centre, Inc. In 1988 Bernard was named President of the Youngstown Symphony Society.

In 1991 Bernard retired from Youngstown State. He was pleased to return to teaching YSU students for several years as an emeritus Vice President of the University and as a professor of chemistry.

Bernie was an enthusiastic life-long learner and avid reader. He reveled in fireworks and lightning storms, and enjoyed tennis, golf, gardening, home improvements and crafts with his beloved wife, Arlene.

Bernie is survived by his four children, Gregory, Gwendolyn Budnik (Jerry), Kathryn Kinderman (Robert), Theresa Gillis (Alan King), niece Ginny Brown, and seven treasured grandchildren.

Bernie is preceded in death by his cherished wife, Arlene Faye Hamilton. Bernie and Arlene shared more than 60 years together, experiencing hard work and sacrifice but also wonderful international travels and thousands of games of bridge, gin rummy, cribbage, and any other game brought their way. He was a loving and exceptional caregiver to Arlene in her final years until her passing in 2015. He is also preceded in death by his daughter-in-law Patricia (Gillis), his parents Rebecca Evelyn and Edward J. Gillis, sisters Mary Church and Lois Gillis, and a number of half brothers and sisters.

The funeral service will be held on August 13, 2022 at Our Lady of Light Catholic Community, 19680 Cypress View Drive, Fort Myers, Florida 33967 at 9:30 AM. Rev. Hugh McGuigan will be officiating. Burial will follow the funeral in the church memorial garden. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be given to the American Cancer Society.

To sign Bernie's guest register or to leave online condolences, please visit www.ShikanyFuneralHome.com.

Arrangements are being handled by Shikany's Bonita Funeral Home, Family Owned and Operated since 1978.

Cemetery Details

Our Lady of Light Memorial Garden

19680 Cypress View Dr.
Ft. Myers, FL 33967

Previous Events

Funeral Mass

AUG 13. 9:30 AM (ET)

Our Lady of Light Catholic Community
19680 Cypress View Dr.
Ft. Myers, FL 33967

Tribute Wall



“ *Bernard T. Gillis*

October 09, 2023 at 03:40 AM



“ *Bernie was my "boss" when he worked at YSU, but I always considered him a friend. He was like a mentor when I was employed by him and he always treated me wonderfully. He will be missed.*

Marlene Dailey - August 10, 2022 at 02:00 PM



“ *Simply Elegant Spathiphyllum was purchased for the family of Bernard T. Gillis.*



August 02, 2022 at 03:09 PM



“ *Peaceful White Lilies Basket was purchased for the family of Bernard T. Gillis.*



August 02, 2022 at 02:46 PM

SS

“ We send our deepest sympathy to the Gillis family. We always enjoyed our annual visit with Bernie in Estero. May he rest peacefully with Arlene forevermore. Love, Shirley and Warren

Shirley and Warren Shields - July 27, 2022 at 02:24 PM

BM

“ To the Gillis family: Reading the biography of Bernie in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette brought back many good memories of this special man. I remember Bernie from his years at Duquesne University, Pittsburgh PA. He was with us from about 1957 to 1970+. He was well liked by students and faculty alike as a likable, friendly professor of chemistry, department chair and dean of the graduate school before moving on to better and higher level academic/research positions. He will be missed by many here in Pittsburgh as a very special person. His family has much of which to be proud in his sake.

God bless him and his family.

Bruce Martin (dean emeritus, School of Pharmacy, Duquesne University).

Bruce Martin - July 25, 2022 at 04:43 PM

AA

“ Kathy, So sorry to hear about year Dad. I remember him with affection from IUP

Allan Andrew - July 24, 2022 at 03:13 PM

GB

“ *Dear Cousins, a life well lived. God blessed our loved one with a wonderful life shared with family, career, and friends. Always in awe of my loving and accomplished Uncle Bud. He will forever be close in my mind and heart. Mingling sincerely my tears with yours, God bless you and support you under your heavy suffering as we await a Grand Reunion. Cousin Ginny*

Ginny, Wayne Brown - July 23, 2022 at 07:53 PM